

Environmental Justice Needs Assessment

*building relationships, increasing community capacity,
and improving service delivery*



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Environmental Justice Needs Assessment Project



What's the problem?

- Rate Payer Equity - Who's benefiting from our programs
- One size fits all approach is not working
- Lack of trust - need to open communication channels
- 1990-2000 foreign born population doubled to 268,300, 15% of King county population
- Lesson learned can be applied to other communities/projects

Potential Barriers

- What is the incentive
- How do you make decisions
- Who is allowed to speak for you
- What's the best way to communicate
- What are the taboos
- Sharing the power



Our Project Partners

- International District Housing Alliance
- Horn of Africa
- Somali Community Services
- Asian Pacific Islander Women and Family Services
Filipino community & Samoan community
- Pasefica
- Local Hazardous Waste Management Program
- Seattle-King County Public Health
- UW Center for Ecogenetics and Environmental Health
- Seattle City Light
- Environmental Coalition of South Seattle
- American Lung Association of Washington - MHE

Project Goals

- To partner with Community Based Organizations (CBOs), other local government organizations, and community participants.
- To jointly conduct a needs assessment to identify the top environmental health needs/concerns of immigrant and refugee communities.



Project Goals

- To build reciprocal relationships with community based organizations (CBOs) that serve immigrant and refugee communities for ongoing provision of information and service.
- To identify service delivery strategies that work in the immigrant/refugee community.
- Increase capacity of CBOs and nonprofits and local government partners, including LHWMP, to serve immigrant and refugee communities.
- To learn from and share with others what works and does not work.

Our approach

- Joint project planning process with community, CBOs, local government and nonprofit agency partners
- Reciprocal training with CBO's on conducting focus groups and surveys, Environmental Justice, HHW, water & energy conservation, solid waste, indoor air, contaminated fish consumption, etc.



What are we doing?

We're asking people, in groups and through questionnaires what the big environmental health problems are in their neighborhood.



What are we doing?

We're offering information on improving indoor air quality, how to save on water and electric bills by reducing usage, using non/less toxic products and proper disposal, etc.



What are we doing?



We are listening.

What are we doing?



Having fun!

The Results

- We have established relationships of trust and credibility for EJNA as a “go-to” source of important HHW and other environmental health information.
- Jointly conducted 5 focus groups in the International District / Yesler Terrace (ID/YT), White Center neighborhoods.
- Agency partners, CBO's and the community have participated in 50+ hours of planning meetings and trainings.
- Provided translation and interpretation of messages in 8 languages (Vietnamese, Tagalong, several Chinese languages, Samoan, Somali, Amharic, and Spanish)

The Results

- Each community group has completed over 200 hours of outreach and 500 surveys at 3 area festivals.
- Conducted 380 home visits and surveys
- Identified work projects in each community.
- Distributed over 400 green home kits.
- Field trips to Waste Transfer Station & Duwamish River Tour.



Lessons Learned

- Add six months at the front-end to get project up and running.
- Immigrants/refugees communities utilize CBOs to find out about services, etc.
- Immigrant and refugee communities want and need access to environmental health programs and services but we are challenged by cultural and language barriers in both directions.
- Honesty. Even if there are cultural dangers try and work through the differences.
- Just because people are from the same ethnic group does not mean that they think & act alike (don't generalize)!

Next Steps

- Continue work in White Center, International District and Yesler Terrace Neighborhoods.
- Expand project boundaries to include other neighborhoods.
- Continue with community meetings, presentations and trainings as identified by the community.
- Field Trips
- Begin work on an educational video for CBO's, community leaders, and residents to use.
- Define project sustainability